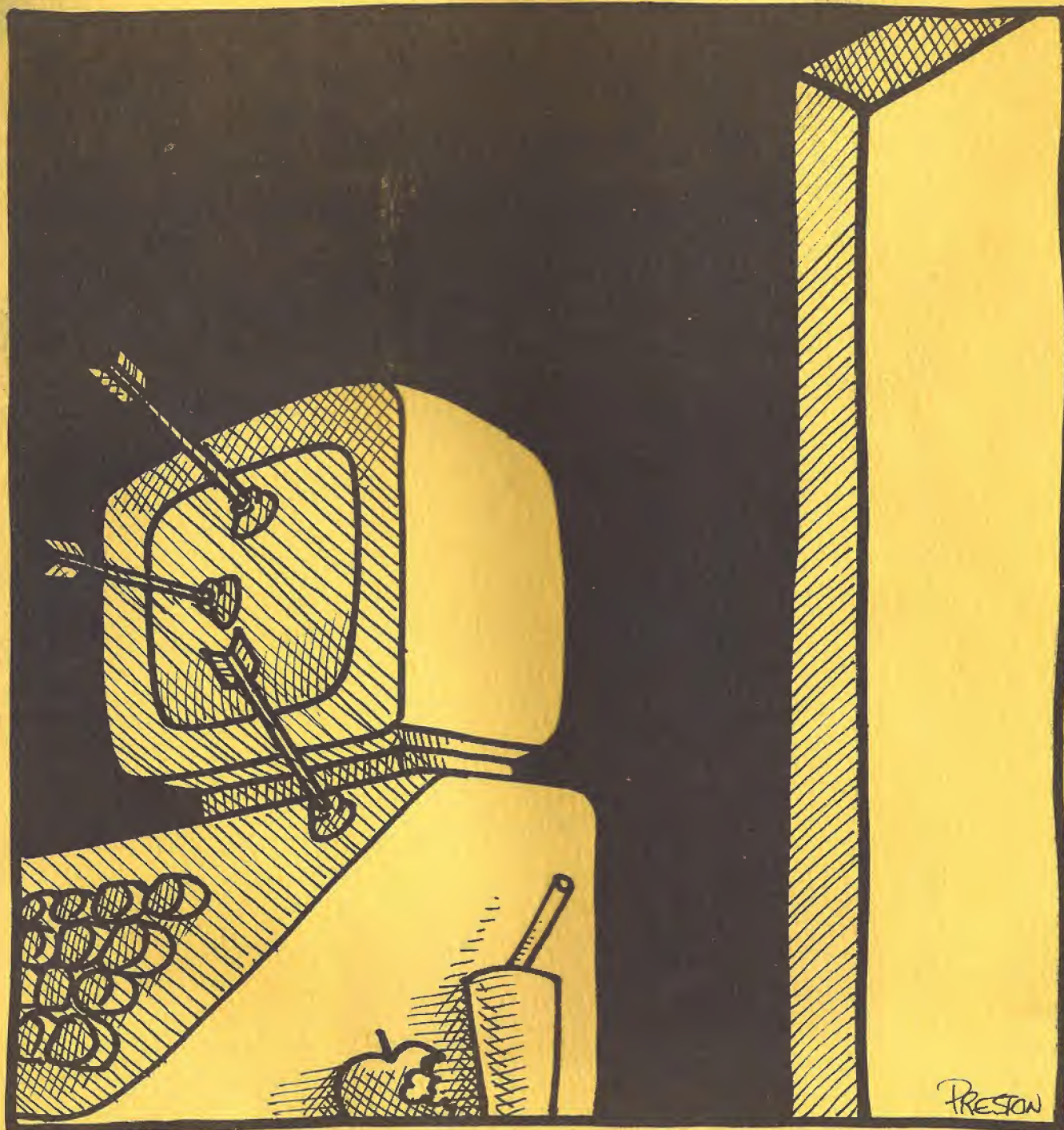


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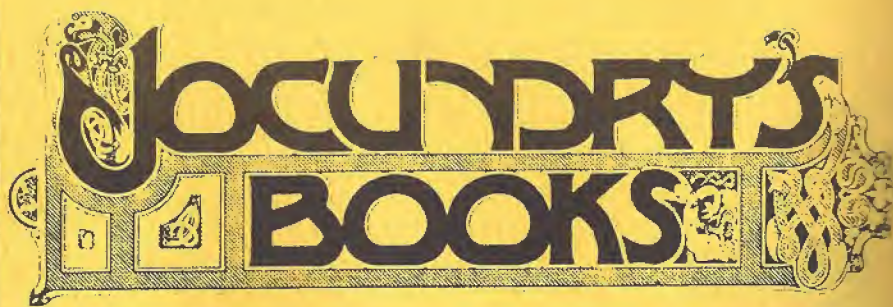
ENERGY = MC^2 ...THE MICHIGAN COMPUTER CONSORTIUM MAGAZINE

ISBN:0740-2759

NOVEMBER 1983



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CMTUG NEWS

CMTUG MEETING NOTES

Our October 2nd CMTUG meeting proved that with an interesting program we can attract some decent attendance. Nearly thirty members, and a couple new faces, showed up to see the fine presentation on terminal software and local bulletin boards, put on by Dennis Hill and Gordon Williams. As promised, those with blank diskettes were able to receive free copies of STERM and XMODEM, two excellent public domain programs for telecommunications. There was also a full disk of other CMTUG program library stuff available for those who were interested.

The November meeting, on Sunday November 6th at 1 PM at the Library of Michigan, 735 E. Michigan Avenue in Lansing, will feature more telecommunications. This time Dennis and Gordon will show us how to download files from a bulletin board, including a demonstration of how to use XMODEM for error-free file transfers. You might want to play it safe and bring some blank diskettes again, in case Dennis brings more software library disks to copy. We recently acquired ten additional disks full of software, and Dennis may have found some good stuff on them.

As many of you know, CMTUG meetings have been revamped, and there is a strict limit of thirty minutes for business matters and formless gossip before beginning the actual feature presentation. That means most of the club's business affairs must be transacted elsewhere, and at a different time. The executive committee, which at this time is comprised of Harold Haughton, president; Dennis Hill, Secretary/Treasurer; Dennis Cullinan, newsletter editor; and Gordon Williams, sysop and concerned member, has been meeting for dinner at the Trowbridge Road Big Boy restaurant. Our next executive meeting will be held there at 5:30 PM, Monday, November 14th. Any member who is interested in helping set the future direction of the club is welcome to attend this and future committee meetings.

CMTUG MEMBERSHIP DUES

If your CMTUG membership is about to expire (check your mailing label for expiration date); or if you are not a member but are interested in joining CMTUG, you may do so by sending \$12.00 to our Secretary/Treasurer:

Dennis Hill
410 Liberty Street
Lansing MI 48906

Membership benefits include access to the club's more than twenty disks of public domain software, the use of our ever-expanding book library, and one year's subscription to *Energy Magazine*. Please make your checks payable to CMTUG, Inc.

BETA-TESTERS NEEDED

Charley Butler, of The Alternate Source (TAS) has received initial copies of a new editor/assembler utility for TRS-80 Models 1, III and 4. He needs a number of experienced users to serve as beta-testers of the program. Thanks to the profusion of possible hardware/DOS combinations, testers are needed to run the program through its paces on five different operating systems: TRSDOS, LDOS, Multidos, Dosplus, and Newdos80. All three TRS-80 models must be tested too. If you wish to serve as a tester in one or more of these modes, see Charley at The Alternate Source, 704 N. Pennsylvania in Lansing, or call him at 482-8270.



NEW TRS-80 MAGAZINE

The publishers of *Interface Age*, a fine business-oriented micro magazine, have come out with a new periodical, *Computer User*. The magazine is aimed at users of any and all models of Radio Shack computers. The premiere issue, which carries a November 1983 date, offers feature articles on such topics as CP/M upgrades for Model I & III, a disk repair 'cookbook', a review of the new Model 4, three TRS-80 workalikes compared, Model 100 memory management, and many more. Some of the authors in the issue are Lewis Rosenfelder, Bill Barden, David D. Busch, and H.C. Pennington.

One new and attractive service available for readers is *PODE*, or "Program On-line Data Exchange". It offers downloads of program listings published in *Computer User*, electronic mail services, various databases, and selected information from the magazine. It involves a user-selected password, and costs \$10 per year, but charter subscribers get the *PODE* service free. Dial access requires calling a 213 area code (California), but rates could be reasonable if you choose your times carefully.

The magazine has a \$2.95 cover price, and charter subscriptions are offered at \$18.95 for twelve monthly issues. I recommend picking up a copy at a newstand, in order to get the card for applying for a *PODE* password. You can see a copy of *Computer User* at the November 6th CMTUG meeting.

LINE EDIT FUNCTION & DEF FN by Bill Brown

The following is a short demonstration program for a DISK BASIC function that can be used as a line editor within a program like the MESGEN program offered in the Connection-80 bulletin board download section or in the Connection-80 message section software itself. It operates on a string of characters to be edited by replacing a portion of it with another string and returning the corrected string.

The function has three arguments:

A\$ -- is the string to be edited.
B\$ -- is the sub-portion of A\$ that is to be "corrected".
C\$ -- is the replacement for B\$.

```
10 CLEAR 1000
20 DEF FN RP$(A$,B$,C$)=
  LEFT$(A$, INSTR(A$,B$)-1*(-(INSTR(A$,B$)<>0)))+
  LEFT$(C$, LEN(C$)*(-(INSTR(A$,B$)<>0)AND B$<>""))+
  RIGHT$(A$, (LEN(A$)-INSTR(A$,B$)-LEN(B$)+1)*(-(INSTR(A$,B$)<>0)))+
  LEFT$(A$, LEN(A$)*(-(INSTR(A$,B$)=0)))
30 A$="THIS IS THE BADD LINE.":B$="BADD":C$="GOOD"
40 A$=FN RP$(A$,B$,C$): PRINT A$
```

In an actual program, input would be taken from the keyboard for B\$ and C\$, then the function called. Note the variable names in the definition of the function (A\$, B\$, C\$) do not have to be the same as those used in the call to the function. That is, lines 30 and 40 above could be changed to:

```
30 X$="THIS IS THE BADD LINE.":Y$="BADD":Z$="GOOD"
40 X$=FN RP$(X$,Y$,Z$): PRINT Z$
```

and the function call would work fine on those variables.

All the complicated Boolean operations in the function definition are for purposes of "error checking". As the function is set up, it assumes that A\$ has a string value of length greater than zero. If B\$ cannot be found in A\$ or if B\$ is null, the original string will be returned. C\$ can be input as a null string, in order to delete B\$ from A\$.

An explanation of parts of the function:

If we were not doing error checking, that is, were sure that B\$ would always be found in A\$, the function definition could read:

```
20 DEF FN RP$(A$,B$,C$)=
  LEFT$(A$, INSTR(A$,B$)-1)+C$+
  RIGHT$(A$, (LEN(A$)-INSTR(A$,B$)-LEN(B$)+1)
```

The LEFT\$ function gets the "good stuff" to the left of where B\$ is found. C\$ adds in the replacement. The RIGHT\$ function gets the "good stuff" to the right of where B\$ is found. When added all together, the function returns the corrected line.

In the actual function definition above, the "good stuff to the left" only gets added in when B\$ has been found:

```
LEFT$(A$, INSTR(A$, B$)-1*(-(INSTR(A$, B$) <> 0)))+
```

Note that the Boolean operation "INSTR(A\$, B\$) <> 0" will equal zero (false) when B\$ is not found and -1 (true) when it is found. Negating this value will give zero or one. When that is multiplied times the starting position of B\$ in A\$ minus one (INSTR(A\$, B\$)-1), which gives the number of characters to take from the left of A\$ to get the "good stuff", it will cause either that many characters to be taken (true) or no characters to be taken (false). It took me a long time to figure out how to get this right, so don't be discouraged if it doesn't jump right out at you on the first reading. The logic of the use of the Boolean operations in the remaining portions of the function is pretty much the same.

C\$ only gets added in when B\$ has been found AND B\$ is not null:

```
LEFT$(C$, LEN(C$)*(-(INSTR(A$, B$) <> 0) AND B$ <> ""))+
```

The "good stuff" on the right gets added in only when B\$ has been found:

```
RIGHT$(A$, (LEN(A$)-INSTR(A$, B$)-LEN(B$)+1)*(-(INSTR(A$, B$) <> 0)))+
```

Note that "(LEN(A\$)-INSTR(A\$, B\$)-LEN(B\$)+1)" is all required to get the number of characters of "good stuff on the right".

The actual function definition has a fourth element:

```
LEFT$(A$, LEN(A$)*(-(INSTR(A$, B$)=0)))
```

which causes the original value of A\$ to be used when B\$ is not found in A\$.

* * * * *

COMPUTER CENTER OFFERINGS

The MSU Computer Laboratory has announced a number of free seminars, for which no registration is required unless otherwise noted. These are the offerings:

CLMS1 -- CP/M Operating System: presents a description of the CP/M operating system available for most microcomputers. Wednesday, Nov. 16, 3-5 PM, at 110 Computer Center.

CLSM3 -- Microcomputer Purchasing Workshop: provides guidance to individuals contemplating purchasing a microcomputer. Monday, Nov. 14, 3-5 PM, at 110 Computer Center.

CLMS4 -- Introduction to Data Base Management on Microcomputers: basic concepts and terminology regarding the general set of techniques for storing, retrieving and manipulating organized bodies of electronically stored information; referred to as DBMS. Wednesday, Nov. 2, 3-5 PM, at 110 Computer Center.

Digitizer: introduces the digitizer graphics service available on MSU's CDC Cyber 750 computer. Thursday, Nov. 3, 3-5 PM, at 215 Computer Center.

Introduction to dBaseII: introduces dBaseII, a popular data base management system for microcomputers. Monday, Nov. 7, 3-5 PM, at 215 Computer Center.

Introduction to Spreadsheet Programs: covers basic concepts of electronic spreadsheets, discusses potential uses and provides opportunity to discuss the general topic. Monday, Oct. 31, 3-5 PM, at 110 Computer Center.

Genstat: introduces this statistical package to new users. Tuesday, Nov. 1, 3-5 PM, at 215 Computer Center.

Graphics: introduces the graphics packages and services available on MSU's CDC Cyber 750 system. Thursday, Nov. 10, 3-5 PM, at 110 Computer Center.

SIR: a hierarchical data base management system on UNSUP. Monday, Nov. 7, 7-9 PM, at 215 Computer Center.

Short Course: Register at User Information Center, 313 Computer Center. For more information call 353-1800.

CL510 -- Introduction to Microcomputers: for \$3.00 the course covers a wide range of related topics, including telecommunications and preparing to buy a micro. October 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26; 3-5 PM, at 110 Computer Center.

MSU TV Computer Series: Two series of TV programs about computing have been available starting in late September. It's not too late to catch some interesting episodes.

Topics in physical science: Introduction to microcomputers: this is actually a British series called "The Computer Programme". The ten episodes appear on Channel 23 on Saturday mornings at 9 AM. It is also carried on MSU instructional CATV channels at other times.

Introduction to Computing: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7 PM Channel 19 of the East Lansing & Meridian CATV system; Channel 30 on the Lansing CATV system. The three weekly episodes are rerun back-to-back on Saturdays starting at 11:10 AM on East Lansing's Channel 19 and Lansing's Channel 30. On Sundays starting at 8:10 AM the same reruns appear on East Lansing's Channel 20 and Lansing's Channel 31.



LOCAL BULLETIN BOARDS

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BabbleNet, Dennis Hill SYSOP.....517-485-6232

CHAOS BBS, Dennis Cullinan SYSOP.....517-373-6788

CASTLE BBS, Barry Griffin SYSOP.....517-371-4321

RCPM, Guy Rogers SYSOP.....616-693-2648
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Connection-80, Jack Soule SYSOP.....517-764-5082

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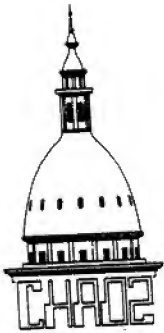
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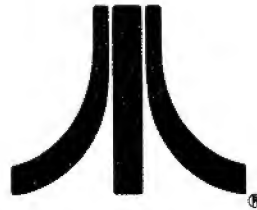
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C.H.A.O.S. IS:

C.H.A.O.S. is the Capitol Hill Atari Owners Society. CHAOS is the largest computer users group in the Lansing area. CHAOS meets every third Saturday in the Foster Community Center (200 N. Foster, behind the Dunkin' Donuts). The meetings start at 9 AM and end around 1 PM. The presentations at meetings include new software, new hardware, and news. Business is limited at general meetings to make the meetings more enjoyable.

C.H.A.O.S. MEETINGS ARE:

FUN, EXCITING, INFORMATIVE, AND CHAOTIC

You will have to see a CHAOS meeting to believe it. The discussions are lively, with lots of news and information. The presentations are of general interest. The speakers arrange their presentations to be understood by the beginners in the group as well as the experts.

The presentations at any meeting may include word processors, games, data bases, educational applications, utilities, hardware, hardware modifications, and hardware enhancements. Many people did not realize they could upgrade their Atari 400 to 48K or 64K before they came to a CHAOS meeting.

There are experts and beginners in CHAOS and there are Special Interest Groups so people with similar interests can learn together.

C.H.A.O.S. IS YOUR BEST COMPUTER PERIPHERAL

In addition to receiving a monthly newsletter that will keep you informed of local, national, and international events in computers, you will have access to the largest Atari public domain library of programs in the world.

C.H.A.O.S. HAS OVER 600 PROGRAMS IN ITS LIBRARY.

The CHAOS library is growing every day. This can save you a great deal of time and money. Programs that you write can be added to the CHAOS library. If you would like a listing of the programs in our current library, please send a large self-addressed, stamped envelope. Include an extra 50¢ if you are not a CHAOS member to cover printing costs. Mail your request to CHAOS, PO BOX 16132, Lansing, MI 48901.

C.H.A.O.S. RUNS A BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM

CHAOS, in conjunction with the Library of Michigan, runs a BBS. A BBS is a Bulletin Board System that you can dial into if you own a modem. The telephone number for this BBS is 373-6788. The BBS provides a means of leaving messages to other computer owners and a means of obtaining software from the CHAOS program library.

C.H.A.O.S. PUBLICATIONS LIBRARY

CHAOS has many books and other publications about the Atari computers that can be checked out by members. Each month CHAOS receives newsletters from other Atari clubs from around the world.

HOW TO JOIN C.H.A.O.S.

If you would like to join CHAOS, then fill out the Membership Application form on the back page of this newsletter.

It is also possible to join MACE (Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts) for a reduced rate when you join CHAOS. MACE, based in Detroit, is the largest Atari club in the world. Their newsletter is of professional quality. The normal membership fee for MACE is \$20.00, but when you join CHAOS you are entitled to a reduced rate of \$10.00 because CHAOS is affiliated with MACE. The total cost for both clubs is thus only \$22.00.

C.H.A.O.S. NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

If your Atari users group would like to exchange newsletters, then please be sure you mail your newsletter to the proper address. The return address on this newsletter is not the CHAOS exchange address. The individual clubs within the consortium are responsible for exchanges with other groups and are billed accordingly. Any information for chaos should be addressed to:

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M.U.L.E. A Review

by Rob Peck

M.U.L.E. is..., or rather it's..., actually it..., on the other hand... Really, it's easier to explain what M.U.L.E. isn't than what it is. It's not an arcade game, nor is it an adventure or an educational program, although it has elements of all three mixed with touches of a board game like Monopoly.

M.U.L.E. is set sometime in the future where you play the part of a colonist on the planet Irata (Note, that's Atari spelled backwards). You and three other colonists are plopped on Irata and promised that the ship will return in either six or 12 months, depending on which level of game you are playing. The return of the ship ends the game.

Oh, I forgot to mention, before you can actually start playing, you have to choose your species. There are eight available, ranging from Flapper (a comical looking fellow who gets extra money and is recommended for beginners) to Humanoid (a creature so smart it actually gets less money, for the expert only). In between are several other interesting choices like: Spheroid, a well-rounded character from the Rollerdoe Galaxy; Packer, who looks amazingly like a certain round, yellow chap with a large mouth and an even larger following; or Mechtron, a mechanical critter always played by the computer if there aren't enough people-type players to make up the four colonists.

Once on the planet, which bears a remarkable resemblance to a 9 x 5 grid, you get a chance to acquire parcels of land (from that grid), and develop them with the help of your trusty M.U.L.E.s. M.U.L.E. stands for Multi-Use Labor Element. You see, you can outfit any M.U.L.E. for farming, energy production, or one of two kinds of mining. Once an outfitted M.U.L.E. is installed on one of your plots of land, you are ready to produce food, energy, smithore, or crystite.

So far, you say, this sounds simple, if not downright boring. Well, there are lots of things to keep it interesting, like planetquakes, wart worm infestations, swamp eel eating contests, acid rain storms, and economics. Economics, I hear you ask. Well, this is where M.U.L.E. gets educational without losing its fun quotient.

Each player needs food and energy to produce goods from

his or her land. If you don't have enough food, you have less time to develop your plots. If you don't have enough energy, your M.U.L.E.s aren't as efficient or productive as they should be. Each player can try to be self-sufficient or they can trust to the other players and the store for their needs. Of course this pre-supposes that other players are producing what you are short of or that the store has a supply to sell.

If any player has a surplus, it can be sold to the store at a price which varies depending on the recent supply or scarcity of the product in question. If the store has any of a given product, a player may buy it from the store, again at a price which varies, but which is always considerably higher than the store is willing to pay for the same product.

Additionally, during each turn's auction phase, the players can trade goods among themselves. Sometimes, another player will be your only source of food or energy as the store has a limited supply, unless somebody sells to it. The auction can get quite cutthroat. You haven't really experienced anger until you need two units of food and some other player, who just needed one unit, buys all eight the store had!

The game is far too complex to attempt to describe in any detail in a review of any reasonable length. Suffice it to say that I, one of the world's least interested in computer games persons, have been completely hooked. Hooked to the point of threatening Ike with physical injury if he doesn't stop calling in the middle of M.U.L.E. games. Moreover, everybody I've showed the game to has also gotten hooked. The first two weeks I had it, I had company ten or eleven of the nights, and it was all people wanting to play M.U.L.E.

This game rates very high in playability and retention of interest. You use joysticks and the arcaders among us will enjoy trying to catch the wampus (a sort of cheshire bear with electric eyes). There are valuable lessons in economics for everybody to learn, almost without realizing it, as well as chances to practice diplomacy, wheeling and dealing, skulduggery, chicanery, double-dealing, and other skills useful to all of us in today's complex world.

Be sure to come to the November Software Round-Up where I'll be demonstrating M.U.L.E., one of the most innovative and just plain fun computer games I've ever seen.

Word Processors A Comparison

by Rob Peck

Well, now that you've had a chance to recover from last month's article, let's get down to the interesting part, the comparison of the four word processors I mentioned: Atari Writer from Atari; Letter Perfect from LJK; Scriptor from the public domain; and Text Wizard from Datasoft. I'm going to do this comparison in three sections: features, including anti-features; documentation; and personal observations.

Features

Let's start with features, and let's make it easy on ourselves by first listing the features common to all or most of the packages before discussing them individually. They all: have full screen editing; reasonable cursor control, including normal Atari use of the CTRL-arrow keys; text centering and underlining; adjustable left and right margins, line spacing, and page length; forced page eject; the ability to insert and delete characters, lines, and arbitrary blocks of text; and file chaining to permit simple printing of documents much larger than your computer's memory.

The three commercial products additionally have: headers and footers, including page numbers; right margin justification; blocked right text; adjustable fonts (on certain printers); and search, with optional replace, operations. So much for common ground, let's get down to the good stuff, and the dirt.

Atari Writer

Good Stuff -- Atari Writer has a very nice screen layout which always shows the file name and the line number and column of the cursor. It has some extra editing commands including move to the beginning and end of the current screen line and move back or ahead one full screen. It is the only one of the four to automatically put two spaces behind end-of-sentence periods. It has a built-in print to the screen preview option. It allows manual fill-in-the-blank form letters. It allows two-line headers and footers. And it uses format lines to control paragraph indentation and spacing making it possible to quickly change your document from flush left paragraphs separated by a blank line to indented, unseparated paragraphs.

Dirt -- Atari Writer won't let you type over incorrect text! Instead, it automatically goes into insert mode when you try, and you have to manually delete the bad text after inserting the new. It also has a special function to change an existing letter from upper to lower case and two different ways to underline depending on whether it is new or existing text. As it comes from Atari, it will only support the various Atari printers, although APX is supposed

to have drivers coming out for other printers. In the meantime, the command they give you to output control strings so you can use any special features your printer may have is somewhat tricky. It can gobble up extra numeric characters if you're not careful. Atari Writer appears to require Atari DOS to load properly. I'm not sure about other operating systems, but I know it will not initialize with OS/At.

Letter Perfect

Good Stuff -- Letter Perfect also has some extra cursor control features, including beginning and end of current line, forward and backward one page, and a continuous forward scroll. It comes customized for Atari/Centronics, Epson, and Dume printers and can be adjusted for many others with a built-in utility. It allows staggered right and left hand headers and footers to keep them on the outer edge of each page. And there is a special version available which will support the BIT-3 80-column board.

Dirt -- Letter Perfect has some very wierd screen 'features', it loses justification when doing large inserts and deletes, it sometimes loses existing characters when inserting at a rapid pace, and it doesn't remove deleted text at the end of the file from the screen even though it has been deleted. It requires its own, unique DOS and can't load files from other sources. LJK recommends against using a Letter Perfect disk for any other storage, which seems like a good idea as I wiped out DOS on a disk before I read that part.

Scriptor

Good Stuff -- Scriptor is written in BASIC and machine language which means that you have a certain degree of control over it; you can add features and customize it to your heart's content. It comes with a built-in help screen in lieu of an external cheat sheet. And it's cheap!

Dirt -- Scriptor is written in BASIC so it's slow. Believe it or not, it's even slower than it is cheap! It will print only one copy at a time. It allows no headers or footers. It doesn't have a go to end of text option. It won't justify the right margin. And it doesn't have headers, footers, or page numbers.

Text Wizard

Good Stuff -- Text Wizard is my normal word processor and the one I compared the other three too when I was selecting their extra features. Therefore, by definition, Text Wizard doesn't have many 'extra' features. It does have some extra cursor control commands including forward and backward approximately half a screen. It also supports double column printing on the Atari/Centronics printer.

Dirt -- Text Wizard comes configured for Atari/Centronics or Epson printers and can't be adjusted for others. Worse yet, the Epson configuration does not include Grafrax-III, therefore it won't support underlining or superscripting and

subscripting. It lacks an absolute or global replace, requiring you to accept or deny each occurrence individually. And it will only print one copy of your document at a time.

Documentation

So much for features, let's talk about documentation. A word processing package, like any other complex piece of software, is only as good as its documentation, a fact which still eludes many microcomputer software houses. Letter Perfect and Text Wizard come in slick paper manuals in padded binders. Atari Writer uses a spiral-bound slick paper manual. Scriptor is documented in the April, 1983, issue of COMPUTE!.

The three commercial products offer tutorial, reference, and cheat sheet documentation, although the tutorial in Letter Perfect is quite skimpy. Text Wizard's tutorial and reference sections are hopelessly intermixed, but the documentation is saved by an excellent index. Atari Writer has an excellent tutorial separate from its reference section, but no index, which makes using the reference section somewhat difficult. All three cheat sheets or quick reference cards are useful, although Letter Perfect's leaves off some information which you will need.

Scriptor is the oddball in the group as it's not a commercial product and doesn't have any documentation in the normal sense. The article in COMPUTE! was intended to introduce you to word processors, tell you how to enter and run Scriptor, and give you enough information to understand and perhaps even modify the program. This is a lot to accomplish in a five-page article. However, Scriptor is saved by having a very good on-line help screen in place of a reference card. There's also a table in the article which is more complete and can be cut out or copied for reference use.

Personal Observations

Okay, we've discussed features, and anti-features, and documentation, what's the bottom line. Well that's really open to a lot of individual interpretation, but I'm willing to share my personal observations after using all four products with you.

Atari Writer

This is a fairly nice product. It will be helped quite a bit when the APX printer drivers are available. It has a menu which I don't care for, but the menu is fairly unobtrusive. The biggest gripe I have with it is the confusing command structure. While most of the commands are somewhat mnemonic, A and Z for beginning and end of line and T and B for top and bottom of text, the command structure is bewildering. For instance you use CTRL A to move the cursor to the beginning of a line and SELECT T to move the cursor to the top of the file and OPTION up-arrow to move the cursor up one screen. If there's a pattern here I can't find it.

This is a comprehensive product! It has the most features of this group of word processors. If you need really fancy things like form letters from a database or staggered right and left hand headers and footers, this is the only word processor for you. Letter Perfect is also menu driven, and with a very obtrusive menu. It has some quirks which I just don't understand, like forcing you to the load screen after each print operation. And the command structure is very confusing due to the many options and the lack of mnemonics. For instance, you use CTRL-Q to move forward one page in your file and CTRL-; to move backward one page. Even after some fairly extensive use (this article for instance), I still can't remember the commands. Besides which, LJK went out of their way to silence the Atari's key click. Some people can't stand the noise while they're typing, but I like it, and I miss it.

Text Wizard

This product has some definite limitations. I wish it had better printer control for special features and it would be nice to be able to print multiple copies occasionally. However, the command structure is incredibly straightforward. It differentiates between immediate commands, which cause something to happen during the enter/edit process, and printer commands which cause something to happen when the document is printed. With the exception of the standard Atari cursor controls, all CTRL commands are printer related, while immediate commands use the OPTION, SELECT, and START keys. The quick reference card is both complete and easy to use.

Datasoft has announced a new product, Letter Wizard, which is supposed to correct most of the problems with Text Wizard, hopefully without taking away any of its good points. This is not available yet, but I have been promised a review copy and will let you know my findings as soon as I get a chance to use it.

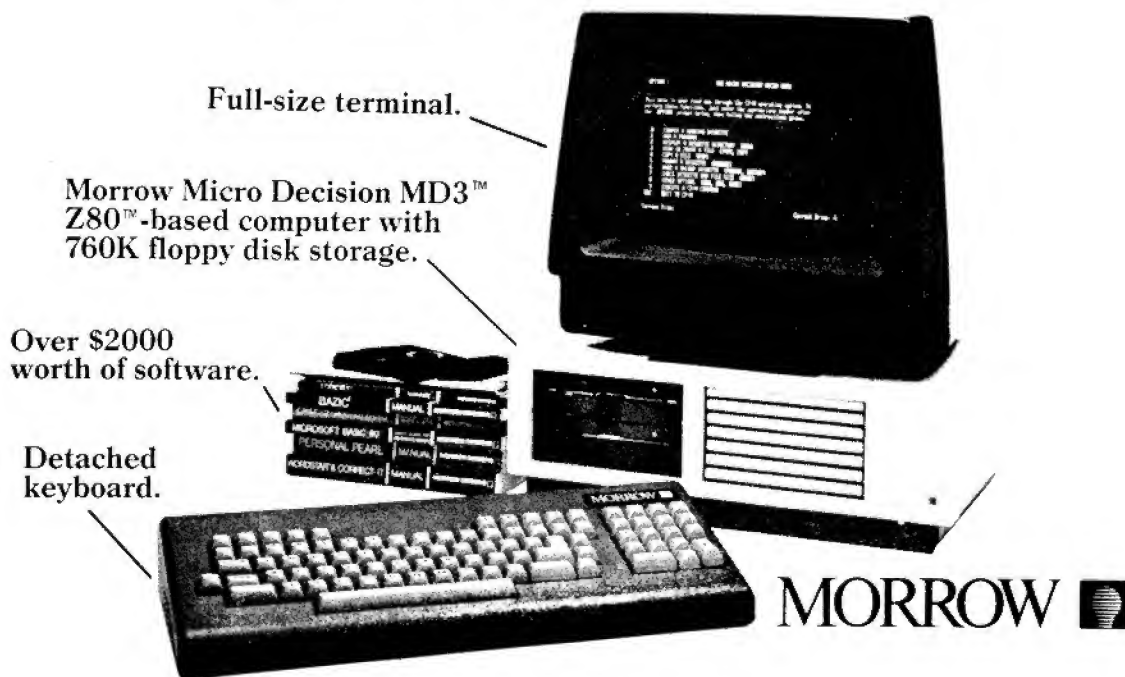
Scriptor

What can I say here, this is a real bargain. It's an excellent way to get started in the wonderful world of word processing when you're broke from just having purchased a printer and interface. It doesn't have many features, but it has all you'll need for correspondence and short papers.

My Bottom Line

My pick, I'll stick with Text Wizard. It's just too easy to use for me to trade it for any of the others. And I can back this up with a case history. I have a friend who just graduated from law school and is now busily sending out letters of application for various jobs. He came over one night and we spent a few hours getting him started and writing and printing six letters. Three weeks later he came over to do some more and was able to pick up and use Text Wizard with virtually no help. Two and a half weeks later, he did it all himself! Personally, I find that a remarkable performance and an excellent testimonial to the overall ease of use of Text Wizard.

AT \$2495, IT WAS A BARGAIN. AT \$1899, IT'S A STEAL.



What's the catch? Absolutely none. We've always said you don't have to pay a lot to get a lot of computer. And this Morrow system proves it.

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*QUEST Bookkeeper requires a licensing fee of \$37.50.

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HOW TO USE PROGLIB TO OBTAIN CHAOS LIBRARY INFO

by Ike Hudson

In the past two weeks I have had several requests to explain how to use the PROGLIB disk. This is a very powerful disk that has information about what is in the library. It can also be used to catalogue your own library. This article will give you enough to get started. I will try to follow it up with a more in-depth article later.

This disk must be booted up with the Basic cartridge in. The first thing you will see will be the menu. There will be several databases on the disk. Take note of which ones you have on your disk. Databases will be named PROGLIBEDB (education), PROGLIBUDB (utilities), PROGLIBGDB (games), and PROGLIBDDB (demos).

The first thing you will do is enter the menu number for the PROGLIB program. This will normally be #1. Once you enter the #1, then RETURN. You will get a new menu that will ask which database you would like. You may now select the number of the appropriate database. If you select one that is not on your disk, then you can expect trouble later. In this example we will select a 1 for DEMOS. Enter a 1 and then RETURN.

You will then receive another menu. This will give you the catalogue options. When you enter a selection from this menu, you will not need to RETURN. The most important option for most people will be number 4 (LIST/PRINT RECORDS). When you enter a 4, you will get a new menu. This menu gives you a whole series of options for listing. You can list based on any of the keys that are allowed, or you can list all records.

If you select 1 (DISK #) then you will be asked to enter a disk number. You may enter up to four digits. Since you selected DEMOS, all the disks will begin with D. If you select D00, then you will get all disks from D000 to D999. If you select D01, then you will get all disks from D010 to D019. If you select D001, then you will get only disk D001.

Once you have selected a disk number, then you will be asked to select the type of listing you want. The first two options will go to the screen. 1 is to list each record and 2 gives an abbreviated listing of records. I like 2 the best. It is relatively fast and gives the most important information. The third option requires a printer. It will list the selected records on the printer.

If you enter the option 2 for abbreviated records, then a listing will begin to appear on the screen. This listing will stop when the screen fills. If you want to see more, then you will press the space bar. If you are finished looking, then you can enter an "E" to end the listing. This will return you to the CATALOGUE OPTIONS menu.

The next most popular option is the SORT option (#6). This option will allow you to sort the database on any of the fields. I usually select either the DISK # or PROGID fields. You will select a 1 for DISK #. YOU must now verify that you want to sort by entering a "Y". You get a message that tells you that it is loading the sort program. You are then asked to

select the database that you want to sort. In this case you will select 1 for DEMOS. In this case you will have to RETURN after selecting the 1. When it finishes sorting, it will tell you how many records it sorted, and then it will save the sorted file. When finished, you will get a menu to select the database again.

The last option I will explain in this article is #1 AUTO CATALOG DISK. When you enter a 1, you will be asked to insert the disk to be catalogued. This disk must be a DOS type disk with file names on it. If the disk has not been catalogued before, then you will be asked to enter a disk number and RETURN. If it has a catalogue number on it, then it will display that number and ask you to press any key to continue. If you run out of space on the disk, you will get an error #1 when you do this.

If all goes well, you will update the database with any programs that are not already in it. Each program that is not already on the database will display an update screen. You will be asked to enter a description (DESCRIP), then RETURN. Next you will be asked to enter the TYPE program and RETURN. Next you will be asked for the SOURCE and finally the DATE. Once you have done this you will enter a "Y" to accept this record, or any key to do the entry again. This process will continue for all the programs that were not previously in the database.

If the entire disk is already catalogued, then it will display the number of records found and return to the CATALOGUE OPTIONS.

I will try to cover the other options in my next article. Until then, TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT, but don't ever do an option #5 (UPDATE RECORD) followed by an option 8 (ALL RECORDS) unless you want to be at the computer all night. If you shut down your computer while you are in the database, you will mess up your database. You can safely shut down only while you are at the CATALOGUE OPTIONS menu.

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!
BUYER READ CAREFULLY--SEE BEFORE YOU BUY!

I have had several calls about the new Microperipheral modem. It is a modem that requires no interface to connect to your Atari. the modem has a printer port that will print anything sent to the screen.

A lot of people read this and now believe they can buy this, eliminate the need for the 850 and use their Text Wizard, Atariwriter or LJK word processor to print on their Epson or Prowriter. This may be true, but it does not say that you can.

I think you will find that this modem will require special software for word processing or any other printing functions that do not go through the modem. I do not believe this is a replacement for the Atari 850 if you want to use your printer with standard word processors like Text Wizard. Look at it before you buy. Try it with Text Wizard and a screen dump utility.

This modem may do what you need. It may not. Don't buy on what you think you read!

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTION

by Dick Peterson

I finally managed to convince my wife Terri that we really "needed" a printer! Now I've actually got to come up with some uses for it so I thought I would write a little article for our newsletter. Most of this article concerns things that I am looking for.

Does anyone out there with a 486 use a JOYTYPER Keyboard? I would like to buy a "real" Keyboard for our 486 that leaves the original membrane keyboard intact. The JOYTYPER is supposed to be available with a detachment option but I don't know anyone who has one. If you have one or know anyone else who does, I would appreciate a chance to see it before we make our purchase. As an alternative, I'm considering the purchase of an unencoded keyboard and doing the wiring myself. Depends upon how brave I get.

Has anyone using the public domain database programs that were published in COMPUTE magazine (Oct '81) made any improvements to the programs? I'm using the programs but would like to have some of the capabilities expanded. Currently, records are limited to 128 characters made up of a maximum of 6 fields. Sure would be nice if both these figures were at least doubled. It would also be nice if random files were supported (using NOTE/POINT) rather than sequential files. This would greatly speed up access time when doing an inquiry to a record located towards the end of a file. These improvements may just end up being a long winter project for me or some other volunteer.

My last need concerns a spreadsheet program. Does anyone have a public domain spreadsheet program that allows storage of the entered figures? Last December COMPUTE published a program called TINY PLAN that provided some spreadsheet capabilities but didn't allow storage of the entered figures. Has anyone given this program additional features? Does anyone have an even better public domain spreadsheet program?

Next is a suggestion for the disk library. Now that more and more of us are running double density disk drives, it would be nice if the club diskettes were available on double density diskettes. Notice that didn't say were available in double density format - that would create too many problems. It's a simple operation for most DD DOS' to copy a SD format diskette to DD format. I don't want to acquire a bunch of SD diskettes if it can be avoided. Practically every diskette I have is written in double density. Naturally, there would have to be a price difference between a single and double density diskette.

Board members - Is this possible?

If anyone has the JOYTYPER Keyboard or the software I'm looking for, please call me at 485-7727.

Piracy will not be permitted at any club sponsored function. If you plan to pirate, then go elsewhere. If you have pirated software, then I don't want it, won't help you get instructions for it, and don't want to hear about it. Neither do any of the other officers of the club. If you want to swap pirated software, then don't bring it to meetings.

Pirated software is any software that does not come on or with original media that it was sold on. You can sell the original, but no one can sell extra copies of it legally. There is no such thing as a "demo copy" of the original. If you don't get the original label on the disk and the original instructions, then you have an illegal copy. If you try to register that illegal copy you may have trouble!

This tirade is brought on by the fact that I was recently shown a copy of software that was purchased from a store. The owner thought he had a legal "demo copy" of the software. It was a pirated piece of software done on a Happy drive. It was even done on a disk with the brand label still on it. In this case the purchase was made at a store outside of Michigan. If it had been from a local store, the club would not allow that store to advertise in our newsletter, use our name or distribute our literature. Swapping is not legal or the right thing to do, but at least everyone involved knows what the risks are. Selling to unknowing and trusting buyers is intolerable. I have not heard of, and trust that I will never hear of any local computer outlets doing anything connected with such dangerous tactics.

In the event that you are tempted to participate in piracy, you should know about Mad Dog. He is the investigator hired by Atari to seek out and prosecute pirates. Rumor has it that he has busted a group of young (15-23 year olds) in Chicago. He is now tracking down leads they have given him to avoid prosecution. Mad Dog was last rumored to be heading toward Michigan to make new contacts at TARICON. Since TARICON was cancelled, he will have to find another way to make contacts. Beware of Mad Dog!



Reprinted from S.C.A.T. (Chicago)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Ike Hudson

The last meeting was a good comparison of various hardware. We had a fairly good variety of disk drives, monitors and some other new pieces of equipment.

We had the Gorilla green screen monitor, but the Taxan amber screen did not make it. From what I have seen of the two, it was no great loss. We also had the NEC and Commodore color monitors to compare with the Sony Trinitron TV. If you aren't into artifacting, and want to have 80 column capability on your color monitor, the only choice is the Commodore. The Commodore was great until we tried an artifacted program. The others just did not look as good. In general, the Gorilla and the Commodore seemed to show the best for your dollar.

The ATR8000 with Tandon drive, Rana 1000 and Atari 1050 drives were all there. The Trak and Astra were conspicuous for their absence. It was noted that the Rana and ATR8000 will have full double density, while the Atari 1050 will only have the half baked enhanced density that some Commodore stockholder must have sold Atari.

It was also noted that the reviews of the Atari implementation of C/PM are going to be equally half baked. It will not be compatible with any other C/PM disks, and what will be available will have to be mail-ordered. Some great support!

The miscellaneous items covered were the Austin Franklin 80 column board, the Koala pad, radio control joysticks, the AT-100 printer and a funny looking non-interface printer cable. Each brings a new dimension to using the Atari computers.

The Austin Franklin board gave a reasonable 80 column display. At least it does not crash in the middle of a program. Although Lance and I spent most of the evening before adjusting it, it still had trouble with the left leg of the W and M. Lance had to change several capacitors in my computer to get it to run that well. Austin Franklin has sent several boards for Lance and I to try. Lance finally added a special oversized capacitor to his computer that allows the 80 column board to do its thing exceptionally well. It is too bad the board did not do as well without the change in the computer. If you plan to buy one, then call Lance first. He will tell you what you need to do to your computer to make it work.

The Koala pad was fun. It works! It is more fun than having a joystick with some special drawing software. It was also very accurate and had great resolution. The drawing Lance did of Garfield was exceptional. The Koala pad has a very hard surface that will not be damaged very easily. Some pads use a soft plastic surface that may be punctured by a sharp object or an exuberant child. The Koala pad or some similar pad is a must for everyone's Christmas list.

The radio control joysticks were more impressive than I thought they would be. The response was exceptionally good. This particular set was on sale for about \$40.00 from some of the local discount stores. At that price they are a good deal. I would not pay any more than that.

I reviewed the AT-100 in the last newsletter. I think that is enough said about this very low cost printer that includes an Atari interface.

The non-interface printer cable that makes the printer work without an interface was demonstrated by Mike Aldrich. It works well for program listings, but does not work with any of the word processing software yet. Lance and Claus are looking into the possibility of making it work with some of the existing word processors.

The next meeting will be a software hodge podge. If you have some software to demonstrate, then let me know what it is. I will try to get it on the schedule. If I don't know about it in advance, then I won't guarantee you a spot on the agenda. We want to make this a fast demo of everything available. We will limit all demonstrations to about 5 minutes. Stores are invited to demo their newest software if they would like. I would hope that they will take this opportunity to show their Christmas wares.

A committee was appointed to determine how our treasury funds will be spent. We have about \$30 in excess BBS modem donations for the BBS disk drive. We also have about \$268 that was raised from the auction. When I proposed the auction, it was billed as a fund-raiser for a BBS disk drive. I hope we will not lose sight of this original objective. We have invested about \$500 in disks for the program library. If we sell the disks we bought with software on them, then we will have a lot of money for a lot of things. If we don't, then we will have a lot of disks.

Support the advertisers that support you. If you need something, then call one of our newsletter advertisers. Give them a chance before you buy! They support our club by advertising in the newsletter. The other stores in the area do not. If the price difference isn't very big, then give our advertisers the benefit of the doubt. If the store where you buy isn't an advertiser, then ask them to start advertising! We want and need their support. If we get it, then the club can do more for you. Remind them to advertise! The deadline for advertising is the 15th of each month. **SUPPORT THE STORES THAT SUPPORT YOU!**

BASIC USER GROUP

By M. Aldrich

Well, the first of many BUG meetings got under way at Sandy Theisen's house Oct 6, 1983. Approximately 10 people attended this meeting.

Mike Aldrich discussed the basics of the ATARI computer (how the Operating System allows other programs to talk to the computer) and the two types of modes (Immediate and Program) that you that enable you to communicate with BASIC.

The following BASIC commands were touched on and will be discussed even further at the next meeting: RUN, LIST, CSAVE, CLOAD, LET, PRINT, GOTO, REM, DIM (Numeric and String) variables.

At the next meeting, people will get a chance to construct small programs and get some hands on time. A few new commands might be introduced if time allows.

BUG meetings are scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. The Basic User Group will be held at people's homes if the class stays relatively small. If the BUG's attendance grows to more than 15 people, it will more than likely be forced to meet at Foster Community Center, 200 N. Foster.

To find out where a meeting will be held, contact Mike Aldrich at 394-2412 or Sandy Theisen at 882-0124 (after 5:30).

VIEW FROM THE TOP

by
Joe Werner, President, M36

OSBORNE REVISITED

Osborne Computer Corporation, in Chapter 11 reorganization due to business problems (see my column in the October ENERGY), has reached an agreement with Xerox Corp. for Xerox to take over maintenance on Osborne equipment. Xerox will pay Osborne around \$1 Million for spare parts, Osborne's customer mailing list, and the right to sell service contracts to Osborne customers -- money which Osborne can certainly use. But this also demonstrates Osborne's concern for the support of their customers. (It's worth noting that when Osborne laid off most of their staff, the ones they kept on were mostly concerned with service and support.) This is an attitude worth noting.

NEW FROM THE SHACK

Radio Shack is releasing a new computer, the TRS-80 Model 4P. The 4P is a portable version of the Model 4. A 26 pound transportable computer similar in shape to the Compaq portable, the system comes with 64K (expandable to 128 K) and two 5.25 inch diskette drives holding 9 184 K bytes each. The unit comes with a nine-inch monitor, and has room to add an internal optional 300 bps modem board. The unit has not yet been approved for sale by the Federal Communications Commission, and Tandy is waiting for this approval before making a big splash. However, the Model 4P was featured on the front page of one of the company's latest catalogs. The 4P is expected to sell for \$1,799, and be available by November 15.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MODEMS

A U.S. modem manufacturer has recently been awarded a patent fundamental to the design of "intelligent" modems. Bizcomp Corp., the patent holder, could have attempted to restrict use of the patent, possibly driving its competitors out of the market. Instead, Bizcomp has chosen to offer its patent for licensing to the 20 or so modem manufacturers whose designs infringe on the patent, and have already signed a multi-million dollar licensing agreement with Hayes Microcomputer Products. Bizcomp President Michael Eaton invented the technique used to control command-driven modems in 1978. Bizcomp filed for the patent three years ago, and it was granted last June. Bizcomp has also claimed and filed for trademark rights on the word "intelligent" when used in conjunction with modems.

WHEN SHALL WE ... MEET AGAIN?

While the East Lansing Public Library has been very nice to us over the past several years, letting us meet at the library at no charge, we have frequently encountered scheduling conflicts. While we nominally meet on the third Thursday of each month, we can schedule the meeting room no more than 20 months in advance, and sometimes (as in October) we cannot get a room on our usual night. We might well want to consider other places and/or times. Other clubs meet at the library on Saturdays, and report that they have never encountered a scheduling conflict. And the Atari club has been meeting at the Foster Community Center (200 N. Foster, Lansing), and reports that they've had no scheduling conflicts. Note that there is nothing sacred about our present meeting time or place. It was born out of necessity. We used to meet on Sunday evenings at LCC. When LCC announced a charge for meeting facilities, we wound up at our present place and time. The Executive Committee is going to be discussing this matter further. If you have strong feelings one way or another about meeting places or times, please let your views be known.

HELP WANTED

I promised a co-worker that I'd try to sneak a free help-wanted ad past our editor, so just this once:

Burroughs Data Communications Technical Services (DCTS) of Okemos MI wishes to discuss career or cooperative educational opportunities with qualified individuals interested in becoming a part of our newly-formed "Smart Workstation Interface Utilities" team. Our needs include skills in the following areas: data communications, networking, SNA/SDLC, CTOS, MS-DOS, UNIX, COBOL, PL/M, and Pascal. Should you qualify, please send your resume to:

Don Stevens
Burroughs DCTS
2400 Science Parkway
Okemos MI 48864

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Our November meeting will be Thursday, November 17th and will feature Frank Dolinar, speaking on "An Introduction to CP/M -- What is an Operating System, anyway?". Our December meeting will feature Dawn Martin, showing off the Chameleon portable computer. The January meeting will include election of officers. (I am an announced candidate for the office of Past-President.) Additional presentations may be added to any or all of these meetings. Come and find out for yourself.

The Executive Committee meets to conduct business for the club on the first Thursday of each month at Beggar's Banquet in East Lansing. Everyone is invited.

1984 BUDGET

The October Executive Committee meeting prepared a preliminary budget for 1984. This budget will be reviewed at the October general meeting (which is unfortunately after this goes to press yet before you will receive the notice). It will be reviewed at the November meeting of the Executive Committee, and acted upon at the November regular meeting.

The proposed budget allocates funds for a number of different purposes, including newsletter costs; participation in Michigan Computer Consortium, MACC, and the Foster Fair; building up a software and book library; and more. The initial budget, based on an estimate of 100 members, involves expenditures of \$1250. This budget, as laid out, dictates M3G dues of \$12 per member per year, with "family membership" retained at \$1 additional per family member.

Because of the timing of newsletter deadlines and meeting schedules, it's difficult to put details in this column. Copies of the proposed budget will be distributed at the October and November meetings, and at the Executive Committee meeting in November. You can also contact me and I'll see that you get a copy. Your comments, suggestions, observations, and ideas are invited, requested and solicited.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON READS ENERGY?

No, our readers aren't all like the "Playboy man". They aren't all young, macho men who fly their Lear Jets to go wind surfing on their days off from coaching the U.S. Ski Team. As a matter of fact, not all our readers are men!

But our readers do share a common bond -- an interest in personal-sized computers. Some pursue personal computing as a hobby only. Others are professionals in the big-computer arena, while still others are active in selling, servicing, programming, and using personal-sized computers. And they're all interested enough that they've joined a local computer club or bought a copy of ENERGY over the counter.

The ENERGY reader is apt to be involved in selection and specification of computers, whether as a professional or as a neighbor. Being experienced, his or her opinions will carry a great deal of weight.

If you're in the business, you need to know this. Your ad in ENERGY is a very effective way to reach computer decision-makers in the mid-Michigan area.

And if you're an ENERGY reader, remember the advertisers who help bring you ENERGY. They have products and services of interest to you. Check them out, and let them know you appreciate their support.

HOW ARE YA FIXED FOR BLADES?

By Joe Werner, M3G

I get a lot of advertisements in the mail. I try to read as many of them as I can, but I'm often reduced to scanning them. Recently, I was brought up short by a brochure -- it isn't often that I see an ad with some of the text written in real, honest-to-goodness Latin. I mean, Latin's a dead language, used sometimes to mock-up a page of print, but not much else outside of church, right?

But there it was: "Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem."

This sentence is so significant it ought to be on a sign over every programmer's and system designer's desk. Instead, it's usually relegated to the dusty corners of the philosophical disciplines.

The statement is known as Occam's Razor, attributed to William of Occam, a fourteenth century philosopher. A reasonably literal translation is: "Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity." But this could well be the first recorded enunciation of the "KISS" principle -- "Keep It Simple, Stupid!"

Occam's Razor is often used in formulating scientific hypotheses, where if two hypotheses can explain a phenomenon, the simpler one is preferred. (We might all have learned the Ptolemaic system of astronomy were it not for Occam's Razor.) But programmers and system designers should also take Occam's Razor to heart. Systems and programs which are made more complex than needed violate Occam's Razor. They also cause problems, headaches, 3 AM debugging sessions, and other occupational hazards.

(Incidentally, the ad I have been referring to was from Inmos Corporation, for a new system design language called "occam". "Occam" is claimed as a trademark for a programming language by Inmos. Given the philosophical premise, I'm curious to see what it looks like.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

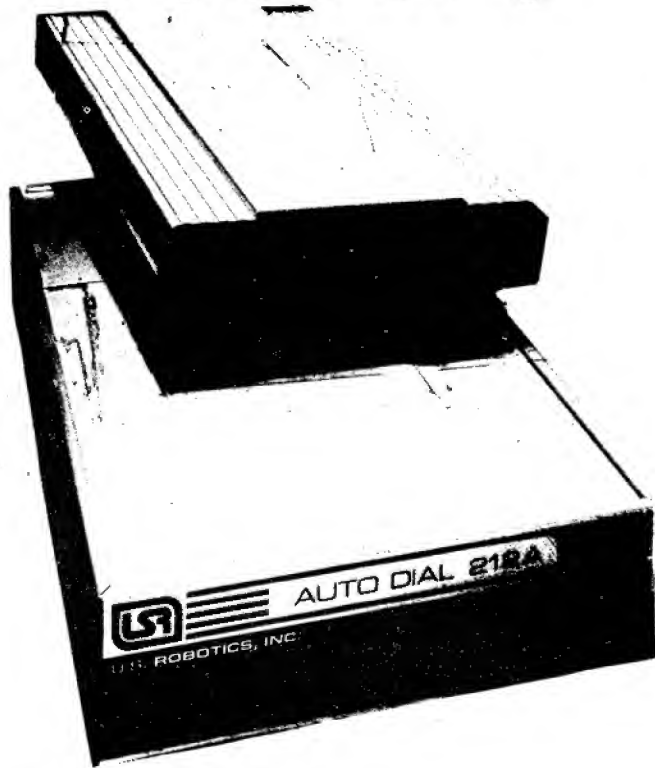
by Joe Werner, M36

From those people who brought you Social Security, the Post Office, and Amtrak, now we present the Phone Company. Yes, stand back and watch. With direction from the Federal courts and orchestration from Congress, we are about to witness the grand divestiture of A. T. & T. Of course, we'll all benefit from increased competition, right? Well, maybe not. And it isn't that the competition is bad, it's just that we're getting to it in a very strange way. First, we need to recognize that there are two different influences at work. One is AT&T's entry into competitive markets, and the other is the breaking up of AT&T itself. While they happen at roughly the same time, they stem from different causes. AT&T has long wanted to enter certain markets (like computer equipment) which were by their nature competitive. But an agreement with the Justice Department (the Consent Decree of 1956, which settled an antitrust action) severely restricted what AT&T could do. Prospective competitors, fearful that Bell would cross-subsidize competitive activities with revenues from regulated services, argued hard to keep AT&T restricted. At the same time, AT&T suddenly found itself a regulated participant in competitive markets such as long distance (against Sprint, MCI, and others), and basic telephone equipment. Meanwhile, in the Federal courts in New York, AT&T faced another antitrust action seeking to break up the big monopoly. AT&T fought this for eight years. After looking at all of this, however, AT&T reached a logical conclusion. In a surprise move, AT&T dropped its fight against the antitrust suit, and agreed to divest itself of its regulated local phone companies (the BOCs, or Bell Operating Companies -- Michigan Bell is one), in return for being able to enter the competitive arena. The breakup becomes official on January 1, 1984. But the fun is just beginning. The 22 Bell Operating Companies will be spun off into seven regional holding companies which will provide regulated local service. AT&T will enter the competitive markets, including long distance, business and residential telephone equipment, and new areas such as computer hardware and software. Yes, the phone system is going to change. And our telephone bills will never be the same. You see, local service is costly to provide. AT&T subsidizes the cost of local service, keeping it low by higher charges for long distance and special equipment. Today, about 35% of AT&T's long distance revenues go toward subsidizing local service. This subsidy was established by federal regulators to control the cost of local service. This subsidy also contributes to the present differential between Bell long-distance rates and those of competitive offerings such as MCI and Sprint. With divestiture, this subsidy will come to an end. Two implications are obvious. The first is that the local companies are going to have to

make up the lost revenue, and the other is that AT&T, freed from the requirement to subsidize local service, should be able to meet or beat the price of competitive long distance services. Already we hear of increased local telephone rates. On top of these, we will have "access charges", mandatory monthly charges for the privilege of having a telephone capable of hooking into the long-distance network. These access charges are presently expected to range up to \$2 per month for residential customers and up to \$6 per month for business users. (I say "expected to" because Congress is, at this late date, considering legislation to change these ground rules.) Access charges are meant to make up for the subsidies now flowing into the local companies from long-distance charges. But we can expect other changes, too. AT&T will significantly restructure its long-distance and special service rates, lowering switched long-distance to be competitive, and substantially raising private-line services. (For example, fees for multidropping leased lines are slated to triple come January 1.) AT&T has also filed a tariff to levy a 75 cent charge on each long-distance directory assistance call, with a credit for one such call per month provided that a long-distance call is made via AT&T during that month. Local companies will also be looking for more revenue. Southwestern Bell in Oklahoma, for example, has started enforcing a 1965 tariff charging \$45.90 a month for "Information Terminal Service" to anyone who connects a computer via a modem to a telephone line. (For details, see a letter in the October, 1983, BYTE page 32.) While I hope that this tariff can be changed, I expect the various local Bell companies to be on the lookout for any way they can improve their revenues. Other traditional practices may change, too. For example when you make a long-distance call, you tie up a long-distance line even if the telephone you're calling is busy. But when the long-distance and local telephone services are no longer provided by the same company, why shouldn't AT&T charge you for using its facilities to find out that someone is on the phone on the other end, or even that no one is home? (This is strictly my speculation. AT&T has said nothing about such charges. But are they unreasonable?) We can also expect AT&T to enter the computer market in a big way. They already have made a big commitment to UNIX (tm), and for the first time are offering UNIX support. They have other software for manufacturing and networking that we may well see released for sale. Moreover, they have several general-purpose computers in the wings. Expect very soon to see a desktop workstation, integrating telephone, terminal, and stand-alone personal computer. In a battle between IBM and AT&T, I don't think I'd want to place any wagers. What does the future hold in store? Except for a few obvious speculations or already announced programs, it's hard to say. But don't ask for whom the bell tolls -- it tolls for thee.

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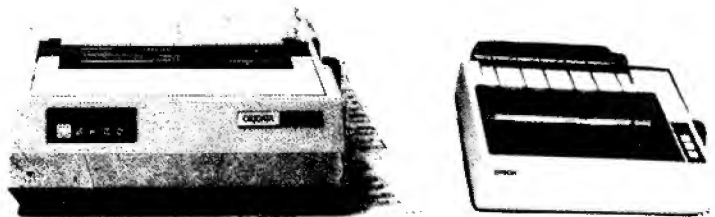


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THANKS
from Daniel Voorhees

I would like to express my gratitude to Bill Enslin, Mike Aldrich, and Ike Hudson for their help getting out the newsletter for the last couple months. Their efforts have been very valuable and I appreciate it.

LOCAL USER GROUPS

CMTUG (Central Michigan TRS-80 Users Group) meets on the first Sunday of each month at the Library of Michigan Microcenter, 735 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, at 1 PM. Contact Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Hill on Babblenet, 485-6232.

The Color Computer Users Group meets at the East Lansing Public Library, on the first Saturday of each month at 1 PM. It is oriented toward the TRS-80 Color Computer and its look-alikes.

The Apple Lansing Users Group (APPLE-LUG) meets on the second floor of Erickson Hall, MSU, on the last Saturday of each month at 9 AM. For more information contact APPLE-LUG at PO Box 271, Haslett MI 48840.

The Capital Hill Atari Owners Society (CHAOS) meets in room 213 of the Foster Community Center, 200 N Foster, Lansing, on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 9 AM. For more information contact Ike Hudson at 487-1125 (days) or 351-3092 (evenings).

The Lansing Area Osborne Users Group meets at the East Lansing Public Library on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM. For more information, contact Jim Pease at 332-8746.

The IBM PC Users Group meets at the MSU Agricultural Engineering Building Computer Lab, on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM. For more information contact Dick Janson at 323-7000 (days) or 675-7453 (evenings).

The Lansing Area Commodore Club meets at the East Lansing Public Library on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM. For more information contact Jim Myers at 487-1043 (days) or 487-8738 (evenings).

The Mid-Michigan Microcomputer Group (M3G) meets at the East Lansing Public Library on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM. For more information contact Joe Werner at 337-7415.

H-ZIG (Heath-Zenith Interest Group) of M3G meets at the Library of Michigan Microcenter, on the last Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM. For more information contact Bill Goodwin at 355-2300 (days) or 349-9657 (evenings).

The CP/M SIG of M3G meets at Capital Federal Savings, 2119 Hamilton Road, Okemos, on the last Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM. For more information contact Joe Werner at 337-7415.

HZ-SIG TOPICS

by Bill Goodwin

The Heath-Zenith Special Interest Group may be a new part of M3G but Heath is not new to the group. In 1977, prior to the introduction of the H-8 and H-11, Heath decided to "take their show on the road" for practice. At that time M3G and SEMCO (Detroit area) were the only clubs in the state. Of course they came to Lansing. Those new machines were magnificent! They sold 2 systems on the spot. Lynn Wardwell and I immediately ordered H-8's. By labor Day '77 M3G had 2 Heath systems in the club.

Now MSU has an arrangement with Zenith to provide Z-100's at low, low prices to Faculty, Staff, and Students. This should result in many new members for HZ-SIG. I have arranged for J & B to enclose a notice (describing this SIG) with each new machine they deliver. As soon as we have a stable meeting time and place I will notify both the national HUG and Sextant magazine of our existence.

Magazines and newsletters are excellent sources of information. There are several that deal with Heath/Zenith computers. If you are a member of the Heath Users' Group then you receive REMARK, their monthly journal. Sextant (quarterly magazine) and BUSS (newsletter) are published by Charlie Floto in Washington, D.C. A newsletter named H-SCOOP is published by Henry Fale in Sheboygan, Wis. Henry is also a Zenith dealer. He has an excellent reputation and very good prices. (I just had a drive aligned and adjusted for \$35. Took just 7 days total.) I have addresses for these for anyone interested.

This column won't reach you until after the second meeting has taken place. I don't know the date of the next meeting yet. The topic for the second meeting was a great new modem program called ZLYNK/II. I hope the latest revision arrived in time for me to show! The topic for the next meeting will be software swapping. Bring blank disks! M3G may have a copy of the entire SIG/M library (110 8" disks of CP/M software) by that time. If so, and we can obtain an 8" drive that night, we can have a copying feast!

I will have xerox copies of a modification for ZDOS's command.com. It will eliminate Date and Time requests on boot, date and time command given alone will just return date and time, not a request for new info, and date and time can be set with use of a command line argument.

CP/M-86 is supposedly available. Has anyone heard of a copy in use yet? I haven't. Sure would like to see it.

INSIDE FACTS

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SAVE THE SINCLAIR

There may be quite a few of you out there who got started in personal computing by buying the cheapest machine you could find. Yes, I'm talking about the Timex/Sinclair which sold recently for around \$15 after rebate. You can pay that much for a four-function calculator, for Pete's sake! Imagine what's running through the mind of the guy who paid \$200 for one of the first Sinclairs. Anyway, there are a lot of them out there, in the hands of people who learned a lot from them -- like how much they really need a bigger computer. Okay, so that's you, you've got a new 48K, 64K or even 128K computer with color, two disk drives and all the bells and whistles. Congratulations. Now what are you going to do with poor orphan T/S 1000? This month we will try to give you some ideas.

To begin with, if you've got a good heavy foot to put down you can insist that your kids use the T/S for their games and other computing activities. There are a lot of neat games for this machine, and the list is growing, but I'll bet the kids want to get their kicks on the new computer just like you do. Good luck on this one.

There are some good applications for the T/S, though, which will make it worthwhile keeping, and which won't leave the kids feeling like second class citizens. I'll talk about just two of them here. The first application is as a controller of a wide variety of household appliances. You've probably heard of those BSR appliance controllers and modules. Radio Shack sold it under their own brand; the control unit cost about \$39 and the lamp or appliance modules ran from \$15 to \$18. These are neat little gadgets, but to use them alone you have to do all the button-pushing or the switches don't go on & off. But if you interface a computer to this set-up you can program those on's & off's to happen automatically. We are talking coffee makers, stereos, lights, furnaces, exhaust fans, even lawn irrigation systems if you want to get tricky. This has been possible with micros for some time, but not many owners were too excited about dedicating their only computer, costing sometimes more than \$2500, to do these things. A cheapo extra computer, though, would be well used in this capacity.

Another idea not too far away from the appliance-control play is to use your T/S to monitor your home for security against intruders or fire. There is, in fact, a new product that plugs into the rear of the computer and contains eight sensor switches which can be wired to doors, windows and smoke and/or heat detectors. When a switch is tripped by the appropriate event the computer is signalled to initiate a pre-programmed task. This could be a sound alarm for the benefit of family members in the house at the time, or it could be the pulse-dialing of your telephone to the police department, the fire department, or to your office. In fact, with clever programming you could set up a sequence of phone numbers to be dialled one after another until the phone is answered. Of course, whoever answers the phone at the other end needs to know what the T/S's signal signifies. It would be a shame to set up a burglary detection system in this way and then overhear your secretary say some day, "It was wierd. The phone rang an hour ago, and when I picked it up there was only a strange beeping tone. I just hung up!"

These are just a couple hints of what the resourceful semi-hacker can rig up with a cheap but powerful little computer. Most of you are well aware of the add-on items now available to make the Timex/Sinclair more useful: full-travel keyboards, extra memory, modems, etc. You are the folks who are making specialty magazines like *timex sinclair user* a big success on the newsstands. There may be some interest out there in forming a Timex/Sinclair users group. If so, I invite you to contact me care of the Michigan Computer Consortium, Box 1302, East Lansing MI 48823. Or you can call Dennis Cullinan at 351-2175 (home), or 373-7513 (work). Perhaps we could get something good going. See you next month!

Matt Cantrell



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